

# Library celebrates history

*Hosts free 100th birthday bash*

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STRATHAM · On July 14, the Wiggin Memorial Library will turn 100 years old and the town is celebrating with events at the historic library, the firehouse and the current library.

In honor of both its recognition on the N.H. Register of Historic Places, and its 100 years as a town center cultural relic, the town is throwing a free party with an ice cream social, face-painting, story telling from Odds Bodkin and historic tours.

## Go & Do

100th anniversary celebration of Wiggin Memorial Library

When: Saturday, July 14, 2-5 p.m.

Where: Old Wiggin Memorial Library (Stratham Historical Society) and Stratham Municipal Center

Cost: Free and open to the public

"The ice cream social should be very fun, especially with the hot weather," said Lesley Kimball, director of the Wiggin Memorial Library. "We are very grateful to Shaw's for donating the ice cream. We are also very excited that premier storyteller Odds Bodkin is coming. He captivates audiences with mythological and traditional tales. Kids, parents and grandparents love it."

The George A. and Emma B. Wiggin Public Library building, which was built in 1911 as requested by Emma in honor of her husband George, wasn't open to the public until July 6, 1912. The building's purpose was to give students a place to study and lived up to that task for 75 years. The books, or blood of the library, were moved to the current site at the Municipal Center in 1990.

"She wanted to give the town a building of which we could all be proud and a public educational institution that enriches our lives," wrote Rebecca Mitchell, chairwoman of the Heritage Commission, in a recent letter to the editor.

Although the old building doesn't have the quantity of books that it used to have, the Stratham Historical Society, as current tenants of the building, have stocked it with books relating to the history of Stratham, genealogy and related topics. The Historical Society has been working to rehabilitate the building and eradicate the moisture and mold problem that has plagued the basement for years.

The Wiggin Memorial Library was recently placed on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. There has been a library in Stratham since the association library in 1793, according to Kimball.

"This town has always had agricultural and rural roots, but has also been tied to education and life-long learning. Libraries were always supported because of that and people saw a real value in making education and learning available to everyone in the community," Kimball said. "That tradition is still going strong. We have great support and are very busy all the time. A lot of people who move into town come to the library as their first place."

Designed by Boston architect C. Howard Walker, who also designed buildings for the 1898 and 1904 World's Fairs; it was built in 1911 by noted Portsmouth contractor Sidney S. Trueman, according to the state Division of Historical Resources.

The stone building, which sits on the corner of Portsmouth Avenue and Winnicut Road, is a turn-of-the-century example of the "eclectic" movement, combining elements of Georgian, gothic, classical revival and shingle styles into a cohesive and elegant building.

In addition to historical displays and exhibits at the old library building, there will be tours through the building, fire trucks on display and recognition of the granite bench recently dedicated to Jerry Bachelder, founder and first president of the Stratham Historical Society in 1970. Jerry's wife Betty served as Stratham librarian in the historic building.

"In the old and 'new-ish' library we will have a station set up for the Stratham Voices Project," Kimball said. "We are looking for people to tell stories of Stratham, which get uploaded to the Remembered Voices Web site where other people can access those and listen to them. It's a great oral history project."

In addition to the events, there will be two raffles for the young and old. The first is for four tickets to a One Direction concert, a newly popular boy-band, in New York, worth \$1,000. The second is a wine raffle, with limited tickets sold for the biggest prize of an "instant wine cellar," as well as tickets sold for smaller lots of wine and a wine tour and tasting for 20 people. Miniature "Cat's Meow" replicas of the Wiggin Memorial Library will be sold as commemorative items.

The 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Wiggin Memorial Library will be held on Saturday, July 14, from 2 to 5 p.m., at the Wiggin Memorial Library, Fire Station and Municipal Center. All events are free and open to the public.